

UNCLAS ABUJA 002047

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR E, AF AND EB, AND PASS TO USAID
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SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S SEA ISLAND COMPACT ACTION PLAN
DELAYED

¶1. Summary: The GON's Senior Special Adviser to the President, Oby Ezekwesili, invited Poloff to her office on December 10 to receive the updated Nigeria-G8 action plan. She instead also invited World Bank Senior Advisor Charles McPherson and, with McPherson as audience, used the meeting to lecture Poloff on how she thought U.S. anti-corruption priorities were different from those of the rest of the G8. She said the updated action plan was not yet ready, and promised to provide it on December 16. End Summary.

¶2. On December 8, Oby's office called the Embassy and requested Poloff meet with Oby on Friday, December 10 at 4pm to receive the long-awaited GON-G8 action plan. Finance Minister Ngozi had said it would be provided three weeks earlier, but internal delays within GON had delayed it.

¶3. When Poloff arrived at the scheduled date and time, Mr. Charles McPherson, Washington-based Senior Adviser to the World Bank's Oil, Gas, Mining & Chemicals Department, was already in Oby's office. Oby asked Poloff to come in, and by way of introduction told McPherson, "As I was saying to you, (Poloff) and his government don't care about EITI because it's not their baby. The U.S. wants their own things because they want to show they did something while they were in charge of the G8." Poloff responded that the U.S. has chaired the G8 as a whole in 2004, and its G8 Transparency/Anti-Corruption Working Group (GETAWG) of G8 member embassies, IMF and World Bank in Abuja. Poloff described GETAWG's work over the past year with the GON to McPherson, who was not familiar with GETAWG. (Note: Abuja-based World Bank staffer Victoria Kwakwa is a member of the GETAWG, but has rarely attended meetings. End Note.)

¶4. Oby laughed loudly and told McPherson she "enjoyed diplomatese," but said that the U.S. wants its own things, not EITI, so she "goes through the motions" to give the U.S. what it wants. She told McPherson that she could continue working with the World Bank to "fill in the gaps where the U.S. isn't interested." Laughing again, Oby said she was amused by the "battle of egos between the U.S. and the UK over EITI." (Note: As Oby well knows, the USG provides active support to EITI inside and outside GETAWG. End Note.)

¶5. Oby waved a folder full of 10-20 sheets of paper, saying she had been working on the action plan the U.S. demanded and would "whittle all of this" into three specific requests, and the "U.S. could do what it wants with it." She said the GON's action plan would be ready December 16 when the Finance Minister returned from her travel to sign the document, which would then be faxed to U/S Larson. Oby agreed to e-mail Poloff a copy for G8 representatives in GETAWG after the Finance Minister had signed the hard copy.

¶6. Oby then ushered McPherson and Poloff out of her office. On the way out, McPherson expressed to Oby the World Bank's interest in supporting the GON's audit function. Oby replied that she knew she could count on the support of the World Bank and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

CAMPBELL